

ABSTRACTS FROM THE ORIGINAL PAPERS.

*Investigation on the Biilman's
Quinhydrone Electrode.*

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This paper deals with several practical and some theoretical points concerning the quinhydrone method of Biilman for determination of hydrogen ion concentration.

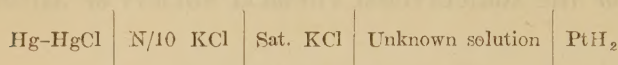
The said method has been in use for the past few years in Europe and America with good advantage over the H_2 electrode especially in the agricultural investigations such as the soil and dairy. We however began to employ the method only recently since Professor L. Michaelis visited us and recommended it very highly.

In a course of preparation of the method, several practical as well as some theoretical points which may be worthy of mention, were noted in regard to: 1. Arrangement of the apparatus; 2. Working formulae; 3. Size of blank platinum electrode; 4. Preparation of quinhydrone; 5. Effect of calomel; 6. Limitation of the method. These points will be considered separately and contrasted with the standard H_2 electrode together with some literature on the method.

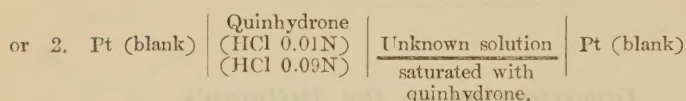
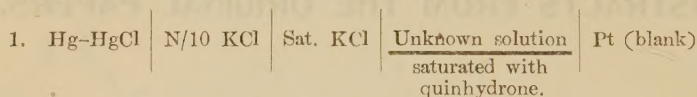
I. Arrangement of the Apparatus.

In order to make the quinhydrone method clearly understood, it will be contrasted with an ordinary gas chain as follows:

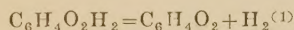
A. An ordinary gas chain, as well known, is arranged as below;



B. The quinhydrone method may be adopted to either one of the following arrangement :



As it is noted, in this method no hydrogen gas is used since the method is based upon the constancy of dissociation of the quinhydrone in the range of certain P_{H} serving as a source of hydrogen. It may be briefly described as follows :



Thus the hydroquinone serves as a hydrogen source and gives a "hydrogen pressure", and it gives the same potential regardless of the electrolytes and of the concentration of quinhydrone.

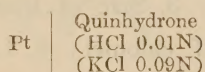
In connection with the arrangement described above, there are several points in particular should be carefully followed :

1. Connection of the chain to the potentiometer ;

In the chain, arranged as in B₁, the quinhydrone electrode forms the positive, and the calomel electrode, the negative when the P_{H} of a solution is smaller than 6.35 while the reverse is true when the P_{H} is larger up to the limitation,

2. Preparation of the Standard Quinhydrone Electrode ;

The direction given in the literature which were available for our review, is somewhat vague as to the concentration and proportion of HCl and KCl used in the preparation. It is generally expressed as follows :



It means that one part of N/10 HCl mixed with nine parts of N/10 KCl. After the solution is made up, it is simple to prepare the standard electrode by merely saturating it with a small amount of the quinhydrone. It keeps in good condition for at least forty eight hours and it can be reproduced with a greater

(1) E. Biilman, J. Agr. Science, 14, 1924, 232 ;— & Lund, Annales de Chimie 9, 15, 103, 1921 ; *ibid*, 18, 321, 1921.

3. In forming a chain, a factor of diffusion should be considered, and some special means may be adopted, for instance, KCl-agar bridge⁽³⁾ of various shape may be used.

Sörenson's working formula for an ordinary gas chain, using N/10 KCl calomel electrode is as follows :

For the quinhydrone electrode, there are three formulae each of which is used according to what kind of chain is formed in the determination.

0.0577 etc.,—thermodynamical factor with temperature correction.

(6) Biilman, loc. cit., p. 233.

of the calomel electrode. Some authors give 2.03 instead of 2.04 for the P_H value of a standard quinhydrone electrode. The authors found that it is safe to determine the actual value of the electrode by means of the H_2 electrode.

In our case it was found to be 2.04.

$$P_H = \frac{(\pi - 0.2485) - 0.3377}{0.0577 + 0.0002 (t - 18)} \dots \dots \dots (IV)^{(7)}$$

$$= \frac{\pi - 0.5862}{0.0577 + 0.0002 (t - 18)}$$

where—

0.3377 potential of calomel electrode.

0.2485 difference of potential between calomel and standard quinhydrone electrode.

This formula is used when a measurement is taken with the H_2 electrode against the standard quinhydrone electrode.

III. Size of Blank Platinum Electrode.

As it is indicated in the literature, the size of electrode has effect on the sharpness of reading the potential. From our experience, it was found that an electrode of 1×1.5 cm. gives very good reading when it was used in combination with type K potentiometer with a galvanometer.

The direction for cleaning the electrode which is given by Biilman⁽⁸⁾ found to be helpful and quoted below :

If the electrodes require thorough cleaning, they should be treated with a hot mixture of chromic acid and strong sulfuric acid, then washed with distilled water and heated to glowing-point over an alcohol vapor lamp or a benzine blow-lamp, but not in gas flame.

IV. Preparation of Quinhydrone.

For our immediate use some quinhydrone (Kahlbaum) was given to us by Professor Michaelis. But we found that it was difficult to obtain further supply in this country. Consequently we prepared some in our laboratory according to the direction given by Biilman⁽⁹⁾ by using the chemicals obtained from our local dealer :

100g. ferric ammonium alum are dissolved in 300c.c. water at ca. 65°C

(7) This formula is based on Veibel's work, loc. cit.

(8) Biilman, loc. cit. p. 237.

(9) ibid p. 238.

and this solution is poured into a warm solution of 25g. hydroquinone in 300 c.c. water. The quinhydrone precipitates in fine dark needles. The mixture is cooled in ice and filtered by suction and the precipitate then washed four to five times with cold water. Yield 15–10 g. The preparation may contain a slight trace of iron, which is without serious effect!

The hydroquinone which was used, was "Hydroquinone Ciba", manufactured by Soc. of Chem. Industry in Basle (Switzerland) and which is commonly used in the photographic work.

The ferric ammonium alum was (Reine Reagens) by S. Ishizu, Osaka.

The experimental results which will be given later indicate that our preparation is very satisfactory.

V. Effect of Calomel upon the Quinhydrone Electrode.

Since our buffer solutions have been kept by an addition of a small amount of calomel from an infection of molds, it was investigated to ascertain if it has any effect. As it will be seen from the results obtained, it has no effect and keeps the solution from an infection.

VI. Limitation of the Method.

Biilman recommended the use of the quinhydrone electrode first only in acid solutions, and later he states that it can be used in basic solutions up to P_H ca. 8.5⁽¹⁰⁾ in the case of soil-water mixture. The author cites that Kolthoff used the electrode at P_H 8 (Rev. Trav. Chim. Pays Bas, 42, 186, 1923). Since this reference is not available here, we have experimented in solutions of which P_H larger than 7 and the results will be given in the experimental part..

Experimental.

The following experiments were carried out to find out the efficacy of the quinhydrone electrode and to demonstrate its relative merits against the H_2 electrode.

The apparatus used were type K potentiometer with a galvanometer #2420-C and other accessories as used in the determination of hydrogen ion concentration.

Experiment 1. Determination of the P_H of Michaelis' standard acetate⁽¹¹⁾ solution: by forming various chain as follows;

(10) Biilman, loc. cit. p. 233.

Series.	Chain.	π	Formula.	P_H found.
1.	$H_2-C.$	0.6031	I.	4.635
2.	$H_2-Q_1s.$	0.8507	IV.	4.632
3.	$Q_1-Q_1s.$	0.1415	III.	4.518
4.	$Q_1-C.$	-0.1056 *	II.	4.512
5.	$Q_2-Q_2s.$	0.1414	III.	4.516
6.	$Q_2-C.$	-0.1055	II.	4.502

Notes: H_2 —hydrogen electrode; C—calomel electrode; Q_1 —quinhydrone (Kahlbaum)

Q_1s —standard quinhydrone (Kahlbaum) electrode;

Q_2 —quinhydrone (prepared here);

Q_2s —standard quinhydrone (prepared with Q_2) electrode.

(These notations will be used in our publication.)

The results obtained in this experiment indicate:

1. Correctness of the apparatus used.
2. Standard quinhydrone electrode gives close readings to those obtained by the H_2 electrode, or within 0.1 pr. so P_H which may be considered satisfactory for most works.
3. Quinhydrone prepared here gives very good results.

Also it was noted that the H_2 electrode takes much longer time to reach the equilibrium than the quinhydrone electrode which on average requires only three to five minutes. However the former gives sharper reading than the latter either against calomel or standard quinhydrone electrode in general.

Experiment 2. Determination of P_H of a buffer solution (Clark) which has been preserved by an addition of calomel, by means of the quinhydrone electrode.

Temperature 16°C.

H_2-C	$Q-C$	$Q-Qs$
0.6518	-0.0335	0.2150
0.6690	-0.0335	0.2152
0.6710	—	0.2152
0.6712	—	—
0.6712	—	—
P_H 5.820	5.765	5.795

The results seem to indicate that the calomel has no effect on the deter-

(11) The solution was sent to us from Professor Michaelis at Aichi Ikadaigaku.

mination while the buffer solution has been kept in good condition for seven months already.

Experiment 3. Determination of higher limit of P_H in the Clark's buffer solutions by means of the quinhydrone electrode.

Solution.	H_2-C	$Q-C$	$Q-Cs$	Temp.
A.	0.7917	-0.0858	0.3343	15°C
	0.7932	-0.0858	0.3343	
	0.7938	-0.0858	0.3343	
	0.7939	—	—	
P_H	7.982	7.852	7.802	
B.	0.7953	-0.1060	0.3531	15°C
	0.3055	-0.1060	0.3530	
	0.8086	—	0.3530	
	0.8105	—	—	
	0.8105	—	—	
P_H	8.280	8.203	2.222	
C.	0.8173	-0.1167	0.3680	15°C
	0.8216	-0.1200	0.3680	
	0.8226	-0.1200	0.3680	
	0.8234	—	—	
	0.8234	—	—	
P_H	8.506	8.452	8.485	
D.	0.8367	-0.1314	0.3844	13°C
	0.8365	-0.1320	0.3842	
	0.8365	-0.1320	0.3844	
	—	—	0.3843	
P_H	8.674	8.674	8.818	
E.	0.8415	-0.1314	0.3896	13°C
	0.8452	-0.1405	0.3908	
	0.8452	-0.1390	0.3903	
	—	-0.1395	0.3909	
	—	-0.1395	0.3913	
P_H	8.951			
F.	0.8581	-0.1422	0.3953	13°C
	0.8581	-0.1450	0.3977	
	—	-0.1462	0.3981	
	—	-0.1493	0.4002	

	—	—0.1499	0.4023	
	—	—0.1523	0.4025	
	—	—0.1536	0.4050	
	—	—0.1557	0.4062	
P_H	8.951			
G.	0.9335	—0.1934	0.4493	13°C
	0.9340	—0.1963	0.4490	
	0.9340	—0.1997	0.4508	
	—	—0.2042	0.4540	
	—	—0.2068	0.4555	
	—	—0.2100	0.4565	
	—	—0.2151	0.4614	
	—	—0.2185	0.4653	
P_H	10.516			

Notes: The arrow indicates that no equilibrium is reached.

The readings were taken at five minutes interval except for the calomel electrode.

As the results indicate, the quinhydrone electrode gives very good comparative readings up to P_H 8.506 and slightly above. However no equilibrium is reached in P_H 8.951 or higher. Also it is interesting to note that the equilibrium was obtained by the quinhydrone electrode where its use was applicable.

Summary and Conclusions.

1. The Biilman's quinhydrone method for determination of hydrogen ion concentration is very satisfactory, and easily adopted by those laboratories which have the gas chain method in operation. Again it can be installed in any laboratory where a few physical apparatus such as meter-bridge, galvanometer or capillary electrometer and other accessories are found.

2. The results obtained by this method are sufficiently accurate for most of the agricultural investigation and general biological work.

3. The method has several merits, namely :—

- Simplicity in its manipulation, and equipment.
- Quicker saturation of the electrode.
- The quinhydrone electrode (standard) can be prepared much easier and reproduced with greater accuracy than the calomel electrode.
- No platinization of the platinum electrode is necessary, and seldom poisons the electrode.

4. An addition of a small amount of calomel to a testing solution has no effect on the electrode while it keeps the solution in good condition for some time.

5. The limitation of the method in the basic solution according to our test with Clark's buffer solution, seems to be about P_H 8.5 or so, and in higher P_H no equilibrium is obtained.

6. The formulae given in this publication may be used for general purpose according to a chain formed.

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